

## Issue 66: INSIDER'S EDGE: Former Foster Care Children—What's a Caseworker to Do?

Welcome back, Insiders! Since it's a short week and you may still be recovering from the holiday weekend, we're going to keep things simple today and revisit a familiar topic—Medicaid eligibility for former foster care children and how these cases should be processed by foster care case managers. As usual, I'll bring our newer readers up to speed on the basics and then we'll delve into the details.

### Who exactly is eligible?

You may remember from *Issue 18: INSIDER'S EDGE: Your questions answered!* that Medicaid now covers former foster care children up to age 26, **regardless of their income**. (No FPL calculations required!) To be eligible, a former foster care child must have been receiving foster care services and Medicaid in Maryland as of his or her 18th birthday. It doesn't matter when the individual aged out of the system, so long as he or she is under 26.

Individuals who were reunified with their parents and were not receiving foster care services on their 18th birthday, or who participated in related permanency programs such as subsidized adoption as of that date, are *not* eligible.

### How should case workers manage former foster care children's cases?

As we transition between the current Maryland Health Connection and the new system, we're undergoing some growing pains. As a result, there are two potential paths a case can take when it comes to ensuring former foster care children retain their benefits up to the age of 26.



#### Option One: Maryland Health Connection

Some former foster care children apply for benefits when they age out of the system using Maryland Health Connection. Individuals who receive benefits using this method will be placed into coverage group E05.



#### Option Two: CARES

Because it never hurts to plan a second route, a new workaround is now available for former foster care children whose applications run into difficulties in Maryland Health Connection and for when consumers contact a case worker directly. These cases must be processed in CARES. Since the E05 coverage group is not an option in the CARES system, case workers should place the former foster care recipient into coverage group E02.

Working with someone who is about to turn 21? No need for them to reapply for benefits—just keep them in E02.

I'm sure a few of you out there are thinking, but Marge, doesn't E02 only cover individuals up to age 21? While that used to be the case, you can now safely keep former foster care children in E02 until they reach the age of 26.

**Have questions?** Of course you do! Shoot me an e-mail, [dhmh.medicaidmarge@maryland.gov](mailto:dhmh.medicaidmarge@maryland.gov).